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THE ADMINISTRATION

The Man with the Innocent Air

(See Cover)

What enables the wise sovereign and good general to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond the reach of ordinary men, is foreknowledge.
—Sun Tzu, *On the Art of War* (500 B.C.)

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"Promotional Intelligence." Before World War II h[illegible]aded, these men, together with like-minded officials of other agencies, had begun to agitate for a permanent strategic-intelligence service. One of their strongest arguments was the fact that the existing U.S. intelligence system encouraged "sales-promotion intelligence." Any information evaluated by the Office of Naval Intelligence, for example, was likely to agree with Navy strategic doctrine and be in support of the Navy view in arguments between the services. The Air Force had a similar record, and if Army and State Department evaluation was less biased, that could be ascribed to the not very creditable fact that the Army and the State Department had fewer ideas on grand strategy than the Navy and Air Force.

There was no agency that was responsible to the President himself and committed to the interpretation of intelligence from the point of view of the U.S. Government as a whole. The Central Intelligence Agency, established in 1947, was designed to fill this function. Subordinate to the National Security Council and thus to the President, it was given responsibility for coordinating all U.S. intelligence activities, and for the preparation of national intelligence estimates representing the best combined judgment of all branches of U.S. intelligence, including CIA itself. This was supposed to give policymakers estimates free of the promotional bids of particular services or departments.

In its first three years of existence, however, CIA, hampered by service rivalry, did not make much of a success of its main job. Instead, the first director, Rear Admiral Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter, concentrated on another CIA function: the collection of those kinds of intelligence which are not the special province of any other agency. Bureaucratically, this was the line of least resistance, but it was not the main job CIA was set up to do.

Though CIA officials do not admit it publicly, the agency was from the start engaged in a wide range of "covert activities": espionage, aid to resistance movements and perhaps sabotage. Armed with all the traditional devices of espionage and a few 20th century improvements, such as plastic explosives and microfilm which can be sealed under the stamp on an envelope, CIA [illegible] across the world. Covert activities have a vast glamour, and emphasis on them is effective public-relations policy.

Cloak, Dagger & Files. In the last two or three years, CIA has got closer to its main function as a central evaluation agency, a mission where the information is hard to get and harder to evaluate, but where espionage is only one of many techniques. The mass-organization of modern military, economic and political systems means that every government has to give thousands of officers, engineers, businessmen, artisans and minor politicians access to thousands of facts that the government might like to cover up.

As a consequence, the modern intelligence agency resembles nothing so much as a research foundation. The modern intelligence officer's primary tools include newspapers, technical publications, broadcast transcripts, interrogation of returning travelers (known in CIA parlance as "debriefing"), and, above all, voluminous files.

To assemble from these sources innumerable single facts, and arrange them in meaningful relationships, requires several types of minds. The information-packed expert on Lower Slobbovian economic history has his place in such a setup, and so has the lawyer or the archaeologist who is trained to draw conclusions from incomplete and obscure evidence. The CIA has dozens more of both types than it has of spies, agents or cloak & dagger men.

Simple Criterion. CIA was still concentrating on establishing itself as an independent intelligence collection and research agency when the invasion of South Korea caught the U.S. Government by surprise. Called up to Capitol Hill to explain why there had been no advance warning, Admiral Hillenkoetter convinced most Congressmen that CIA was not at fault. Nobody asked a critical question which nevertheless hung over CIA's head. The question: Had CIA ever pulled all the intelligence services together and produced a national intelligence estimate on the North Korean threat? The answer: no.

Four months later Harry Truman appointed "Beedle" Smith to succeed Hillenkoetter. Assisted by Dulles and New York Investment Banker William Jackson (TIME, July 20), Smith revamped CIA from top to bottom. Items:

¶ A Joint Watch Committee, including members from the military services, the State Department, the FBI and the Atomic Energy Commission, was set up to keep an eye on day-to-day indications of Communist attack anywhere in the world.

¶ An Office of National Estimates was established; in the first month of Smith's regime, it produced ten times as many combined intelligence estimates as CIA had turned out in three years.

¶ For the first time, all U.S. intelligence agencies began to get regular guidance from a central source on what information they should look for and the urgency with which it was wanted.

Smith and his team also shook up CIA's staff, which included a considerable num[illegible] tantes. In Smith's first month, 50 employees were fired. The criterion which Smith established was simple. Said he: "I don't care whether they were blabbing secrets or not. Just give me names of people at Georgetown cocktail parties."

The Mysterious Visitors. CIA staffers, who respected but feared Smith, are even more impressed by Allen Dulles, who runs the agency smoothly and with apparently inexhaustible energy. Dulles is in his office every morning by 8 o'clock, often works through till 11 at night. Though he is burdened with the reading of a staggering number of documents and the usual quota of time-consuming conferences (including a weekly meeting of the National Security Council), Dulles manages to see scores of visitors every day, ranging from foreign ambassadors to secret agents. To avoid embarrassing confrontations, Dulles' visitors are frequently dispersed among a number of nearby offices, with Dulles himself moving from room to room like a big-city dentist.

These summer weekends Dulles hurries up to his handsome shore place at Lloyd Neck, Long Island, where he spends as much time as possible with his wife, two married daughters and son Allen Macy, an ex-Marine lieutenant who is still recuperating from a near-fatal head wound suffered in the fighting around Korea's Bunker Hill last November.

Room for Improvement. Much of the increased respect with which CIA is now regarded in Washington is directly attributable to Smith and Allen Dulles. But Dulles himself is the first to admit that there is plenty of room for improvement. Relations with the military intelligence services, though better than ever before, are still less than good. (The Navy, which had advance warning of the Batista *coup d'état* in Cuba last year, failed to pass the word on to CIA.) Because of insufficient filtering and analysis at lower levels, a vast and confusing flood of information is still passed up to top U.S. officials. Says Dulles: "We have got to get more selective, and that may mean fewer people."

Congress has let CIA alone. So far, the only serious interference has been Joe McCarthy's demand that a CIA employee appear before his committee—a demand which Dulles, with White House backing, flatly and successfully rejected (TIME, July 27).

So Dulles has a free hand to tackle an old, old job with new methods. He thinks that U.S. intelligence is now better than the British, but he has not yet caught up with the more serious competition. Because the U.S. is—and expects to remain—an open society, the job of Communist intelligence here, Dulles thinks, is easier than his own. Some day, however, he hopes that his collection of scholars, scientists, historians, lawyers and spies will be running a service second to none in its field—as effective, perhaps, as Joshua's.